

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 0571

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BG, IN

SUBJECT:HCORDER TENSIONS WITH INDIA

1. THE BDG TOOK ADVANTAGE OF CONGRESSMAN DIGGS' VISIT HERE THIS WEEK TO REPEAT ITS ACCUSATIONS THAT INDIA IS EXERTING UNACCEPTABLE PRESSURE ON BANGLADESH. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY DEVELOPED THIS THEME MOST EXPLICITLY DURING CONGRESSMAN'S CALL ON HIM JANUARY 29 BUT PRESIDENT AND DCMLA COMMODORE KHAN ALSO MADE PASSING REFERENCES TO INDIA'S THREATENING ACTIVITIES DURING MEETINGS WITH THEM.

2. PRIOR TO THE FULL MEETING BETWEEN CONGRESSMAN DIGGS AND FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSAIN AND AIDES ON JANUARY 29, FOREIGN SECRETARY ASKED THE CONGRESSMAN AND ME TO JOIN HIM FOR A FEW MINUTES' PRIVATE CONVERSATION IN HIS OFFICE. HIS PURPOSE AS IT TURNED OUT WAS TO APPRISE THE CONGRESSMAN OF BANGLADESH'S CONTINUING CONCERN ABOUT INDIAN INTENTIONS. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE NEW BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN MAKING SERIOUS EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA BUT THEY CONTINUED TO REMAIN UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE INDIAN SIDE, PRESSURE WHICH INCLUDED BORDER VIOLATIONS. HE SUMMARIZED THE RAIDS AGAINST THE SEVEN BORDER POSTS ON JANUARY 19-20 IN TERMS ALREADY FAMILIAR TO US FROM HIS CONVERSATION WITH ME LAST WEEK (DACCA'S 0425). HE ACCUSED INDIA OF TRAINING A NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE, SUPPLYING THEM WITH ARMS, AND SENDING THEM INTO BANGLADESH FOR ATTACKS ON

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BORDER POSTS. HE ALSO REFERRED TO PRESS COMMENTARY IN INDIA

WHICH WAS UNFAVORABLE TO BANGLADESH AND HELPED KEEP TENSIONS ALIVE. HE SAID THE NEW GOVERNMENT WAS IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY BUT IT DID NOT WISH TO BE DIVERTED FROM ITS TASK OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY TENSIONS WITH INDIA.

3. IN ANSWER TO THE CONGRESSMAN'S QUESTIONS, FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID THAT PURPOSE OF INDIAN PRESSURE EVIDENTLY WAS TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE HERE WHICH WOULD MAKE THE GOVERNMENT SUBSERVIENT TO INDIA AND TOE THE INDIAN LINE. HE CITED BANGLADESH'S DEVELOPMENT OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN AND A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA AS POLICY AIMS HERE WHICH INDIA DID NOT APPROVE OF. HE SAID THAT BANGLADESH WANTED TO HAVE STILL BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND EVEN THIS WAS NOT FAVORED BY INDIA. HE SAID THAT BANGLADESH WAS SPEAKING TO ITS FRIENDS ABOUT THE INDIAN PRESSURE SO THERE WOULD BE AN AWARENESS OF THIS PROBLEM.

4. PRESIDENT SAYEM ALSO GOT ON TO THE SUBJECT WHEN CONGRESSMAN DIGGS ASKED WHETHER THERE MIGHT BE ANY FACTORS WHICH MIGHT LEAD THE GOVERNMENT TO POSTPONE ITS ELECTIONS BEYOND THE SCHEDULED DATE OF FEBRUARY, 1977. NOTING THAT THIS MIGHT BE ONE SUCH FACTOR, PRESIDENT SAID BANGLADESH WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE HAD ASSURED THEM ONLY TWO DAYS AGO THAT THEY ALSO WANTED GOOD RELATIONS BUT THE PROBLEMS ON THE BORDER CONTINUED. PRESIDENT THEN ASKED FOR MY READING OF THIS SITUATION. I SAID I COULD NOT JUDGE THE LOCAL SITUATION ON THE BORDER BUT THAT I DID NOT CONSIDER THE SIGNALS I WAS GETTING FROM INDIA TO BE ALARMING. I THEREFORE HOPED THAT WHATEVER WAS GOING ON AT THE BORDER WOULD QUICKLY PASS.

6. COMMENT. NONE OF THE BANGLADESHI OFFICIALS REFERRED TO SPECIFIC INCIDENTS OTHER THAN THE ALLEGED ATTACKS ON JANUARY 19-20, BUT DACCA PRESS IS CARRYING REPORTS OF A FURTHER BORDER VIOLATION ON JANUARY 29 WHICH WAS REPORTEDLY REPULSED (DACCA 0570). EVEN SO, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S TONE WAS LESS URGENT THAN IT HAD BEEN IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH ME A WEEK AGO. WHILE THE TENSION UNDENIABLY CONTINUES, THESE CONVERSATIONS DO NOT APPEAR TO REFLECT A SERIOUS ESCALATION THIS WEEK BUT MORE PROBABLY THE BDG'S CONTINUING

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EFFORTS TO MAKE ITS CASE WHENEVER IT CAN TO FRIENDLY MISSIONS AND HIGH LEVEL VISITORS.
BOSTER

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